

SECRET

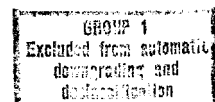
14 December 1964
DRAFT

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Evaluation of the Defense Intelligence Agency
With Respect to the Far East

1. Although sometimes commendable, DIA contributions and participation on FE estimates have for the most part been poor. In our view, DIA simply has not put the adequate stress on Far East intelligence production to effect satisfactory results. In result, the US intelligence community is woefully shaky on a myriad of Far East military questions -- years behind the attention and sophistication of the community's Soviet effort..

2. DIA's representatives usually lack a good knowledge of the areas on which they are working and sometimes lack experience in intelligence work. In fairness, these weaknesses are not to be easily overcome because of the diversity and difficulty of the intelligence problems encountered in work on the Far East, and because of what we judge to be a DIA practice of generally assigning their better people to EE projects. Furthermore, we emphasize that there are shining exceptions to this generalization, and we should also point out that our personal relationship with DIA people is almost always gratifyingly congenial.



SECRET

~~SECRET~~

3. Part of DIA's trouble, in our view, stems from its bureaucratic dichotomy. The representatives with whom we deal come from the "Estimates" part of DIA, while most of the detailed research is done by the "Production" section. The "Estimates" representatives are often not familiar with the details of the facts and figures worked up by the "Production" section, and, moreover, seem ~~to~~ loath to question or challenge the work done by their colleagues. In this connection, we have found that representatives of the individual services (ONI, ACSI, and AFCIN) are often able to make valuable contributions of information in their special fields.

4. A detailed evaluation of DIA's performance on Far East problems can probably best be presented under three main headings: Communist China, Indochina, and the rest of the area.

A. Communist China:

(1) DIA's competence on China has suffered from a lack of sufficiently high claim on resources. For example, DIA was asked for an all-source contribution to an estimate on Communist China's military establishment, but the contribution submitted was at the SECRET level and reflected no serious attempt to exploit our most valuable sources. In our effort at a first draft on this paper, we used scarcely a line or phrase from the DIA contribution. Recently, more attention has been focused here and some progress has been made, but, in our opinion,

~~SECRET~~

SECRET

much remains to be done before it could be said that the best job possible is being done with available information.

(2) As far as we know, little fresh and imaginative analysis has been done on such broad topics as the Chinese Communists' strategic military doctrine and their long-range plans for development of China's military forces.

(3) On the Chicom order of battle DIA claims a high level of confidence as to unit designation at the division level and above, but admits little is known about the actual (as opposed to formal) tables of organization and equipment or about the levels of combat readiness of various units. In this connection, DIA is reluctant to describe and explain the methodology it uses in arriving at various OB estimates. While ^{we} granting ~~that~~ this would be a tediously complicated process, its importance is illustrated by the fact that DIA's decision earlier this year to change its estimate of the size of the infantry division resulted in an abrupt decrease of 300,000 in the estimate of the manpower of the Chinese Communist Army. We are not qualified to judge or challenge in detail DIA's OB estimates, but we believe there are sufficient uncertainties to warrant a thorough airing of the matter. We are not proposing an inquisitorial exposé of DIA's work, but we do believe that the community would benefit from a careful exchange of views which would highlight our weaknesses and perhaps suggest fruitful avenues for improving

SECRET

~~SECRET~~

our knowledge on this important topic. For example, intensive exploitation of photography holds some promise, but so far only the surface has been scratched.

(4) For Estimates of the production of military equipment we quite frankly have to turn to ORR. DIA has continually served up estimates, many of which are dubious, and some of which are demonstrably grossly in error.

(5) We are unable to judge DIA's competence on advanced weapons matters because whatever work they have turned out in this field has thus far come to us through inter-agency committees.

B. Indochina:

(1) Recently, papers produced on this crisis area have generally been crash projects with short deadlines where written contributions were infeasible. Hence the substantive knowledge and ability of the representatives to contribute constructively in coordination sessions has been of unusual importance. Of the two DIA representatives who have attended meetings on Indochina papers in the past few months, only one has performed well.

(2) Despite private reservations, DIA representatives have been prone to accept without challenge the data and assessments of local military commanders. We have also detected a

~~SECRET~~

tendency on the part of DIA representatives to avoid assessments which might run counter to policies and decisions which they believe military planners and policymakers favor.

C. Elsewhere in the Far East:

(1) DIA's work on Malaysia/Indonesia/Philippines area has been weak. Contributions have been inadequate even on such "open" subjects as Commonwealth OB in the area. Contributions on such matters as Soviet military aid to Indonesia have had to be corrected and supplemented by ORR.

(2) We are skeptical of the soundness of work on North Korean military matters, but this subject has not been recently given intensive study in national intelligence papers.

(3) Coverage of our military forces of South Korea and Nationalist China is very good on gross matters of OB, less satisfactory on matters of leadership, plans, and morale.

ONE/FE Staff